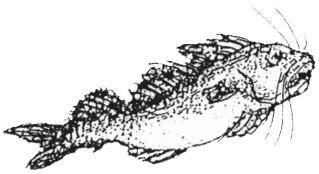


THE FALLSER

NEWS & EVENTS FOR THE EAST FALLS COMMUNITY



Recycle That Christmas Tree

Put that "used" live Christmas tree to good use!



The East Falls Community Garden will host a Christmas tree recycling event on Sunday, January 5th, 12 noon til 4pm, in the Community Garden, located at Ridge Avenue and Scotts Lane.

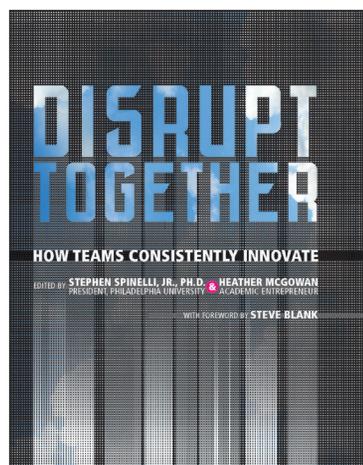
Taking part will prevent your tree from adding to the landfill, and the Garden will make good use of the wood chips generated.

A \$3 donation per tree is requested to help cover the costs of machinery and manpower.

PhilaU President Co-Authors Book

Philadelphia University President Stephen Spinelli Jr., an entrepreneurship expert, and former Assistant Provost Heather McGowan have co-authored the new book "Disrupt Together: How Teams Consistently Innovate," which details effective team-based approaches to achieving innovation in business, education and other industries in disruption.

The book, released Dec. 10, has been as high as number one on Amazon's top 10 list of "hot new releases" in the market research business category. It includes chapters by 14 addi-



tional disrupters from business and education who provide

(continued on page 14)

Billboards on Public Schools?



by Meg Greenfield

Councilwoman Blondell Reynolds-Brown has introduced a bill to allow bill boards, building wraps and other signs on school district owned or controlled buildings. The bill specifically exempts the signs from the Zoning Code. The Councilwoman's intent is to raise much needed funds for the schools, a laudable goal that might well backfire.

There is school district controlled property in almost every residential neighborhood, including East Falls. Do you want to see a billboard from your bedroom window or as you walk around your neighborhood? This bill, as written, would allow billboards in places where they have been prohibited for decades.

Concerned about this proposal, the Crosstown Coalition of neighborhood civics arranged a meeting with the

Lost Property Values with Billboard at Mifflin School

We paced off, conservatively, 500 feet from the Mifflin School property line and counted houses. We did not get to all streets. For those we counted, we found 329 houses.

Apartment buildings or commercial spaces are not included. If we omitted your block, apologies—it was cold and deadline time was running out. Lost assessed value calculated to be \$10,199,000.00 (31000 x 329) and lost property tax of \$136,666.60 within a 500 foot radius. It is fair to believe that the impact may

recede with distance but it will not suddenly stop at 500 ft. Number following street name indicates number of houses within 500ft.

- 3600 Conrad St. 11
- 3500 Calumet St. 65
- 3400 Penn St. 47
- 3500 Conrad St. 5
- 3500 Ainslie St. odd side 16
- 3300 Cresson St. 9
- Lafayette St. 7
- 3500 New Queen St. 58
- 3400 Queen La. 30
- 3400 Coulter St.6
- 3400 Warden Dr. 2
- 3500 Warden Dr. 3
- 3400 Midvale Ave 37
- 3400 Tilden 33

Councilwoman's staff to talk about it.

First, we asked if anyone had considered the impact of such

advertising, or even the possibility of such advertising, on nearby residential property val-

(continued on page 4)



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How Appealing is Your Real Estate Tax Bill?

Have you filed an appeal with the City's Board of Revision of Taxes (BRT) regarding its tax valuation of your home – the AVI (Actual Value Initiative)?

If you have not received the final determination of your AVI assessment appeal when you receive your 2014 Real Estate tax bill, then:

- Pay your tax bill in the same amount as your 2013 tax bill -- on or before March 31, 2014.
- When a decision on your appeal is finally rendered,

you will be obligated to pay (within 30 days) any remaining balance due.

• If you pay any remaining balance within 30 days, you will not be charged any interest or penalty.

These provisions are contained in the amended Section 19-1303 (parts 6, 7, and 8) of The Philadelphia Code.

For further information, contact Councilman Curtis Jones at 215-686-3416 or 3417, or by email to curtis.jones@phila.gov.

Proposed assessment too high? Too drastic an increase? Didn't receive one?

Have questions about the City's Actual Value Initiative (AVI)?

The East Falls Community Council is gathering a list of East Falls residents who want to have their questions individually addressed by the Office of Property Assessment.

Councilman Curtis Jones will arrange individual appointments for residents to have their questions and problems addressed.

To request an appointment, contact EFCC at info@eastfallscommunity.org or 215.848.3300. Please provide name, address, and phone number; do not give any details.

See also the article by Michael Mattioni on page 15 regarding Philadelphia's LOOP program which provides real estate tax relief for qualified Philadelphia home owners.

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Letters

The Fallser welcomes letters to the editor dealing with topics of general interest. This is not, however, an arena for personal attacks. All letters should be 200 words or less, must be signed and include the address and verifiable phone number of the writer. The staff will withhold a writer's name if requested to do so; however, unsigned letters will not be considered for publication.

Re: Cresson St. Wall Story (December 2013 issue)

Thanks to Sue Park for sending the article about the Cresson St. Wall Construction Project. Chris Caporellie is the East Falls resident who deserves primary credit for this 1.7M safety improvement along the SEPTA railroad. He called it to the attention to the East Falls Community Council, got the membership involved, and then persisted for three years following up with the City and SEPTA.

Thanks, Chris.

Tom Sauerman

Save Our Ship!

The Lady in Waiting," also known as the S.S. United States, desperately needs the biggest life preserver you have ever seen. She isn't sinking but this glorious ship and its history are in danger of being lost forever.

This ship was a dream of advanced engineering conceived by William H. Gibbs and Daniel H. Cox. Both were visionaries. Gibbs designed three-fourths of WW2's Naval ships. He took all this knowledge and put it into the S.S. United States. So much ahead of her time, certain things like the propeller and the engine design were kept secret from the rest of the world. Completed in 1952 in New York, on her maiden voyage, she shattered every other eastbound speed record, bringing the "Blue Riband" award home to America for the first time in a century. No other ship ever beat this record. Her speed shook the world!



In her eleven years of service, the S.S. United States made about 800 transatlantic voyages and had the likes of some of the most famous movie stars and presidents in our history--mind blowing to an eleven year old kid like me. It was totally fireproof... no wood on board except a Steinway piano and Butcher blocks!

In 1963, the ship was abandoned by the United States Lines--too expensive compared to jets and cheaper materials. This is where it all goes downhill. Many had dreams and hopes for her over the years, but nothing happened. I am a Philadelphian, and although the ship has been left to sit, I can see a happy ending.

It isn't just a big boat, bigger than the Titanic by about one hundred feet, but it is about the American spirit and how strong it has been and can be again. As time ticks away, my purpose becomes clearer... spread the word and save this amazing ship! Go to www.ssusc.com to help and learn more about this magnificent ship.

Ravi Giberson



Filling Vacant Ridge Ave. Properties

by Gina Snyder, Exc. Dir., EFDC

The East Falls Development Corporation has stepped up with a strong effort to fill empty storefronts in the East Falls Riverfront Business District. With funds from the State's Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED), and supported by Sen. Vincent Hughes, we hired Stacy Simon, to recruit businesses and we created new marketing materials.

Stacy has already successfully introduced BuLogics to its location at Ridge and Midvale. She is working with several other potential tenants and investors. It is a long process to secure leases and sell properties, but Stacy has generated activity through her extensive contacts and hard work.

In January, the EFDC will address the East Falls Community Council's Zoning and Land Use Committee us with an applicant seeking a variance for Frequency Tattoo Parlor on the 4000 block of Ridge Avenue (across from Dobson Mills Apartments). East Falls resident John Howie, the business owner, wants to open a high-end. John has been in the business for more than ten years and his salon-style shop should fit right in.

Times have changed for tattoo parlors – tattoos have become commonplace. They are very popular among adults under 40 where the percentage of people with tattoos in this age range is about 40 percent. Tattoo parlors are opening in

shopping malls. Several neighborhoods in Philadelphia have parlors, including Manayunk and Passyunk Avenue.

Business districts seek to provide personal services for residents, since retail shopping has moved to the internet, malls and big box stores. It is a good sign that entrepreneurs such as Mr. Howie, are looking to invest in our community.

Parallel Parking in the 4200 block of Ridge Avenue at the Inn Yard Park

Several months ago, I wrote an article about the launch of construction documents for additional parking spots in the 4200 block of Ridge Avenue. I mistakenly said that it was supported by the Friends of the Inn Yard Park. I apologize for this error. The fact is, the parking was driven by and overwhelmingly supported by the East Falls community.

The original idea had come from a community planning process which included multiple public meetings, *East Falls Reconnects to the River*, in 2003. The concept plan was approved by vote of the East Falls Community Council on two separate occasions. It was supported by letters and petitions from local residents, property owners and businesses. It was supported by the playground group at the Inn Yard. The EFDC is happy to move forward this community driven plan that will bring much needed parking for families, residents and Ridge Avenue's business customers.

Apologies to online visitors to TheFallser.com. We have been experiencing a problem since an automatic update. Hope to resolve shortly.

THE FALLSER

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